

employer medical costs increased 72 percent between 2000 and 2006. Some companies report spending more than 50 percent of their profits to cover these expenses. Employers are also increasingly bearing costs of diet-related chronic disease and obesity. For example, obesity-related health conditions cost employers approximately \$33 billion in health care and other indirect costs. However, proactive treatment would significantly reduce costs. The proactive treatment of hypertension costs about \$1,000 per year, whereas treatment for a heart attack costs a minimum of \$50,000, not including the costs which result from the time off and loss of productivity.

Employer spending on health promotion and chronic disease prevention is a good investment in our future. And this legislation targets primarily smaller and mid-sized companies who would otherwise have difficulty making the initial investment needed to support such programs. Workplace wellness programs are economical, averaging \$30 to \$200 per employee and studies have reported a proven rate of return on investment within 12 to 18 months, ranging from \$2 to \$10 for each dollar invested.

Adaptable lifestyle factors such as smoking, sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, unmanaged stress, and obesity account for approximately half of premature deaths in the United States. Spending on chronic diseases related to lifestyle and other preventable diseases accounts for an estimated 75 percent of total healthcare spending and it is estimated that by 2014 our country's total health care expenditures will be \$3.6 trillion.

Clearly we cannot continue down this path. We must shift the focus of our nation's health care system to prevention and wellness programs. In so doing, we can reduce health care costs, improve health, improve quality of life, and boost productivity. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of health care spending is devoted to health promotion. The national investment in prevention is currently estimated to be less than 5 percent of annual health care costs. Our Nation needs a new approach to healthcare—one that puts prevention front and center.

The Healthy Workforce Act is one piece of the larger reform needed to our Nation's health care system. But it is a critical piece. By providing incentives for America's businesses to provide wellness programs for employees, they and their employees can focus on chronic disease prevention and health promotion, reduce health care costs, boost productivity, and improve the health and quality of life of working Americans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in seeking a more effective approach to preventing chronic diseases and providing incentives for employers and employees facing rising health care costs by cosponsoring the Healthy Workforce Act.

IN MEMORY OF BILL WIRTZ

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life and memory of a constituent and one of the most beloved people in the Chicagoland

area—Bill Wirtz. Last week, Mr. Wirtz passed after a battle with cancer at the age of 77.

Most knew him as the president of the Chicago Blackhawks, where he worked for the last 41 years. However, his fame in sporting circles was only surpassed by his infinite kindness and generosity. Through his direction, the Chicago Blackhawks Charities donated more than \$7.5 million since 1993 to various organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs. He also was renowned for his compassion toward his employees, treating them like members of his family.

The crowds at his visitation and funeral demonstrated the high-regard that thousands had for Mr. Wirtz and his accomplishments.

I know I speak for the entire district when I send my deepest sympathies to his wife Alice, sons Rocky and Peter, daughters Gail, Karey and Alyson and his seven grandchildren. His memory will live on through the institutions he helped create and those whose lives he touched. It is because of this that his passion and dedication will never be forgotten.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, October 1, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes on H. Con. Res. 185, H.R. 2276, and H.R. 3325.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 924 on suspending the rules and passing H. Con. Res. 185, Commending the 1st Brigade Combat Team/34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 925 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 2276, the Corporal Christopher E. Esckelson Post Office Building Designation, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 926 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3325, the Corporal Stephen R. Bixler Post Office Designation, I would have voted "aye."

CELEBRATING PHILADELPHIA ENGINE COMPANY 52'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the Philadelphia Fire Department's Engine Company 52 on celebrating its 100th anniversary. Since 1907, a dedicated unit of firefighters has served the Wissinoming community in the lower Northeast section of Philadelphia from this same location. I am honored to represent them in Congress.

In Philadelphia 271 years ago, Benjamin Franklin established the first Fire Department in America. He noted that once a fire was "cried out, active community members would with one mind apply themselves with all vigilance and resolution . . . to the hard work of

conquering the increasing fire." From this beginning, he developed societies of firefighters to attend to all fires in their neighborhoods. These companies formed the basis of the firefighting and fire prevention efforts of our city's current Fire Department.

Engine Company 52, originally known as the Wissinoming Fire Company, was dedicated to serving the community along a tributary of the Delaware River. Originally housed in a large red brick two-story building at Jackson and Van Kirk Streets, the top floor of the fire company was the home of the neighborhood school. Behind the building was a stable for the horses that pulled the firefighting equipment and a tower where fire hoses were hung to drain and dry. As the community grew, so did the fire company still known as "The Fifty-Two's." In 1951, the city built a new firehouse on the site. Today, Engine 52 is known as "Pipeline 52" because of its large capacity equipment used to supply water to other companies when major fires occur; in more recent years "Medic 32", an Emergency Medical Service unit has been added.

Today, the "Fifty-TooZ"—as they call themselves—serve a residential and business community, protecting the lives of those who live and work in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District. As in the days of Benjamin Franklin, they "apply themselves with all vigilance and resolution," as well as dedication and courage, to protect their community.

Madam Speaker, once again I congratulate all of the members of Engine Company 52 for their service, dedication and sacrifice. I look forward to continuing our work together and ensuring another 100 years of success, safety and security.

STABILITY FOR SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, the issue of stability in southeastern Europe is once again high on the world's agenda. In December, issues concerning the status of Kosovo will again come to the fore. Regional stability is tied closely, but not inextricably, to these issues. As we approach the winter months, it is important that our southeastern European friends be strong internally so that they can be producers of stability and not consumers of it.

Our friend, the Republic of Macedonia, is one such producer of stability. Time and again, it has proved itself a great friend and ally of the United States of America. Time and again, it has proven itself a friend to neighboring states. Time and again, it has stepped up to the plate and provided support to the United States in the War on Terrorism by providing soldiers to serve alongside our own troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Time and again, it has worked with and voted with the United States on important resolutions in the United Nations.

Unfortunately, our friend Greece has not been so supportive of the Republic of Macedonia. In 1993 and again in 1995, Greece imposed economic sanctions on Macedonia because Greece claims, entirely and exclusively, the word "Macedonia." Despite the fact